

CHAPTER 4

BOARD MEETINGS AND DECISION MAKING

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At the center of the management of any community association are board of directors meetings. These meetings are the source of policy decisions that:

- Impact the quality of life in the community
- Enhance the overall value of the assets commonly held and individually owned
- Set the boundaries within which management will function

The emphasis of board meetings should be on timely attention to policy matters—leaving the day-to-day administration of the community association to the manager.

Authorizations of specific actions and approval of contracts and committee recommendations allow the governance, business, and community life of the community association to function smoothly. For this to happen, the manager must play an integral role in the preparation, organization, and proper conduct of meetings.

This chapter explains four aspects of board meetings that contribute to effective decision making:

- Focus
- Preparation
- Conduct
- Manager's role

What You Will Learn

After reading and reviewing this chapter, you should be able to explain and understand:

- Three areas of board decision making
- Importance of focusing meetings
- Legal requirements for board meetings
- How to prepare for decision making at meetings
- Notice of meeting, agenda, and supporting materials
- Management report
- Site selection and preparation
- Basic principles of parliamentary procedure
- Establishing a quorum
- Use of motions
- Role of the presiding officer
- Proper behavior during debate
- Executive sessions
- Recording minutes for meetings
- Action item list
- Owner meetings
- Dual role of a manager
- How to facilitate a meeting
- Role of personalities in meetings

Board meetings are a means of effective decision making when they focus on:

- The areas in which a board is authorized to make decisions
- The decision-making process itself

Areas of Board Decision Making

There are three areas of board decision making. They are related to the three functions of a community association board of directors:

- **Business**—As volunteer leaders responsible for a community association's business affairs, a board must monitor administrative, financial, and property maintenance matters for the purpose of preserving and enhancing the community.

- **Governance**—As volunteer leaders responsible for governing an organization, a board must:
  - ☐ Enforce the community's governing documents
  - ☐ Adopt and enforce rules for governing the community
  - ☐ Decide issues of policy for the owners in the community

- **Community**—As volunteer leaders of a community, a board must:
  - Promote harmony through service programs and regular communication with owners
  - Attempt to settle conflicts
  - Hear appeals of committee and management decisions that are protested by individuals or groups of owners

The Importance of Focusing Meetings

A manager must use the board of directors meeting as a critical date for decision making and implementation.

Board meetings should always focus on:

- The decisions to be made during the meeting
- The presentation of possible solutions
- The setting of new priorities that become the next meeting's agenda items

When you and your leaders approach meetings in this manner, the community association will progress from decision to decision in an orderly and progressive manner that will achieve the community's goals. When meetings are neglected, irregular, or poorly planned, the results will be confusion and paralysis.

PREPARATION

Adequate preparation for a board of directors meeting includes:

- Conforming to legal requirements for board meetings
- Preparing for decision making
- Distributing a notice of meeting, agenda, and supporting materials
- Selecting and preparing a meeting site

Conforming to Legal Requirements for Board Meetings

State statutes and governing documents establish requirements for board of directors meetings. Be sure to check your community's legal documents.

Legal requirements most commonly address such issues as:

- Frequency of meetings
- When meetings should be open or closed
- Notice of meetings
- Voting

Preparing for Decision Making at Meetings

Think of a board meeting as the end of a decision making process, not the beginning.

- **Set up an annual calendar of board meetings at a fixed time and place.** Consult with your board of directors when you set up the calendar.

- **Schedule meetings often enough to allow for timely attention to matters requiring action or decision by the board.** Meetings can be monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly—depending on the community's needs as well as legal requirements, such as governing documents and state law.

- **Involve key players in the meeting preparations.** Before you finalize an agenda for a meeting, consult with the presiding officer—usually your board president—and relevant committee chairpersons.

  Once an agenda is established, check to:
  - □ Be sure everyone responsible for an agenda item understands what is to be accomplished
  - □ Verify that people are prepared for the agenda items for which they are responsible
  - □ Offer assistance, as needed

- **Prepare your board members to make decisions.** A board of directors has the responsibility to come to a meeting prepared to make decisions.

  A manager has the responsibility to see that information necessary for decisions is gathered, disseminated, and adequately presented. Therefore, be sure to provide information to the board early enough so directors can read and absorb it *before* the meeting.

There are three things a manager should provide to board members before each meeting—a notice of meeting, an agenda, and supporting materials.

Notice of Board Meeting

A **notice of meeting** should be sent in writing to board members at least a week before a meeting. Exactly how far in advance you send a notice of meeting may be set by your community association's governing documents or state statutes.

- A meeting agenda and any supporting materials should accompany the notice.
- All owners should receive a board meeting schedule at least once a year.

Agenda

Meeting agendas follow a standard format, based on parliamentary procedure. (See below.) The various agenda items are discussed in the pages that follow.

An **agenda** is more than an announcement of the order of business for a meeting. It is a meeting management tool. For example, by specifying the duration of a meeting in the agenda or allotting agenda items specific amounts of time, you are helping the board to proceed with its business in a timely manner. Note that meetings that run more than two hours often degenerate into an unproductive effort.

Where the agenda allows discretion in the order in which items are considered, give some thought to the order in which you list them. Should some decisions precede others? Will the board feel a sense of accomplishment if it makes a number of small decisions before tackling a complicated one?

When an item requires discussion, but a decision is inappropriate or premature, label the item "for discussion only" on the agenda. This allows for the free flow of ideas. But the discussion must be restricted to the specific topic listed.

During a meeting, a presiding officer can appeal to the agenda as a way to keep a group moving and focused on decision making.

If possible, post a meeting agenda in a central common area *before* each meeting. Any owner who attends a board meeting should be given an agenda.

The **residents forum**, typically held at the beginning of a board meeting, is an open forum for owners and residents to speak. This gives them the opportunity to raise items for *future* board consideration.

SAMPLE AGENDA FORMAT

Call to order 7 P.M.

Establishment of quorum

Residents forum

Review/acceptance of minutes

Treasurer's report

Management report

Committee reports

Unfinished business

[List items which were previously discussed or reviewed, but did not receive final action.]

New business

[List new items not previously discussed, including committee or management requests.]

Review of action items

Set the date of next meeting

Adjournment 9 P.M.

Supporting Materials

In addition to a meeting agenda, board members should receive such supporting materials as:

- **Minutes from the last meeting—**(See page 82 for a discussion of minute taking.)
- **Financial report—**This is a report on the community's financial condition and activities.
- **Committee reports—**These reports should be in writing and highlight matters to be decided and recommendations by the committee. Supporting research should be included in the reports. Committees need to clearly state the actions they are asking the board to take. Provide your committees with a suggested format for their reports and a sample.
- **Management report—**This is the manager's report on the association's current management and administrative activities. It is the manager's opportunity to update the board on action items of interest or concern. (See the sample on the next two pages.)
- **Special reports, memos, or correspondence on issues to be discussed**

In a properly prepared board meeting, all members should have had the information needed for discussion *before* the meeting.

Site Selection for Meetings

If your community association does not have a meeting room, schedule board meetings in public meeting rooms that usually do not require a rental fee. Possibilities include a local church, school, or library. Be sure to give board members and owners plenty of advance notice if a meeting is off-site.

Avoid meetings in homes of board members. The space will not always be adequate. Nor is a board member's home a public and neutral site that will encourage owners' attendance.

Site Preparation

Here are some tips on site preparation from experienced managers.

- Make arrangements in advance for a well-lighted, comfortably warm or cool environment.
- Serve any refreshments *after* the meeting.

October 1, 20XX

7:00 PM — Executive Session

ACTION 1: Decision on employee year-end bonuses. The budget allowed $2,000.00 for bonuses to staff members. If a bonus is to be given, the amount is the board's decision. The vote needs to be for each employee who is to receive a bonus.

7:15 PM — Regular session

Old Business

ACTION 1: Discussion and decision on fence between XYZ and ABC Condominium. ABC will pay for half of the cost (approximately $1,000.00) to raise the fence height by two (2′) feet. Board needs to vote if you want to pursue.

ACTION 2: Update on community center renovations.

ACTION 3: Update on hallway renovations at 3648. Carpet, paint, and tile work were authorized at the September meeting.

New Business

ACTION 1: Discussion and decision on the purchase of new radios for the maintenance staff. Prices quoted from Radio USA ranged from $1,300 - $2,800. Refer to our memorandum of September 17, 20XX for the details. No money has been budgeted for these radios. Current radios are over 12 years old and require an annual maintenance service.

ACTION 2: Letter received from Joyce Brannon of 3648 regarding the $50.00 furnace rebate. Refer to her letter of September 4, 20XX. We need to provide a written response to Ms. Brannon about why she is not entitled to the rebate.

ACTION 3: Decision needed on the renewal of the trash removal agreement. No change in the price until July 1, 20XX, at which time the trash contractor would like to present a fee increase based on the dump fee. We budgeted $5,150.00 per month. His current price remains at $5,000.00. Recommend approval.

continued on next page

Information items for board review. These items will not be discussed unless specifically requested by a director.

1. Extra decals stating "Aluminum Cans Only" were received and installed on the recycling containers.

2. Jones Carpentry installed the larger mailboxes at 3952.

3. The agreement with Jones Carpentry for the construction of the disabled access ramp and miscellaneous repairs has been fully signed. Work in the community center commenced on September 15, 20XX. Smith Architects prepared all the drawings for the ramp and submitted all papers to Humboldt County for the permit.

4. Correspondence summary:
   A. Board, RE: Patrol activity report, September 20XX.
   B. Board, RE: In-house maintenance, September 20XX.
   C. Board, RE: Maintenance log, September 20XX
   D. Residents, September/October 20XX newsletter.
   E. Residents, building 3950, RE: Items in hallways, under steps, 8/26/XX. **Removed, 9/04/XX.**

5. Violations:
   A. Powell, 3854, RE: Dog not on leash.

6. Hearing scheduled for Tuesday, October 15, 20XX:
   A. Pirson, 3880, RE: Leak damages.

7. Fine Updates:
   A. Savage, 3884, fine due to leak damages, balance due of $85.00. Has not been making any fine payments. Charge remains on account. Lien filed for nonpayment of fine.

8. New sales:

DATE	ADDRESS	FEE	AMOUNT
08/17/XX	3886	$276.00	$66,000

- Avoid alcoholic beverages. This is an official meeting.

- Provide adequate seating for all the owners who attend. Inadequate seating may make people feel like unwanted or unexpected intruders.

- Arrange for a table for the board that allows board members to sit facing each other close enough to conduct the business of the meeting. This type of seating arrangement encourages board members to interact and emphasizes that they are working together to make decisions. If possible, avoid having the board members sit with their backs to the owners in attendance.

- The presiding officer should sit at the head of the table with the manager beside him or her. This will make it possible for the manager to give your presiding officer immediate assistance—if needed.

CONDUCT OF BOARD MEETINGS

Adequate preparation is necessary, but not sufficient, for effective decision making at board meetings. Unless a meeting is conducted in a manner that supports decision making, your preparations will be wasted.

This section of the chapter discusses the elements of a meeting that contribute to effective decision making:

- Basic principles of parliamentary procedure
- Establishing a quorum
- The use of motions
- The role of the presiding officer
- Proper behavior during debate
- Executive sessions
- Recording minutes for meetings
- Action item lists

Basic Principles of Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules for conduct at meetings. Experience demonstrates that this can be a very effective decision making method in a group setting. Be sure to introduce new board members to parliamentary procedure as they take their places on the board.

The most popular version of parliamentary procedure is *Robert's Rules of Order*. There are many sources available that present these rules in a simple, straightforward way (see the

list of resources at the end of this chapter). Make the effort to train your board to use them effectively.

Parliamentary procedure recognizes a few basic principles of conduct for *every* meeting:

- **Order:** A board should consider one item of business at a time.
- **Courtesy:** The rights of the individual should be respected and protected.
- **Majority rule:** The will of the majority should decide issues. (Technically, it may be a plurality that decides an issue, not a majority. See page 79 for the difference.)
- **Protection of rights:** The rights of the minority should be protected.
- **Justice:** Everyone is entitled to a fair hearing of his or her position. A board should not act on an issue during the same meeting in which it was raised—unless it is an emergency or a very minor matter. The principle of justice requires that all sides be heard before a decision is made.

Establishing a Quorum

The basic requirement for effective decision making that parliamentary procedure establishes is the need for a quorum. A **quorum** is the number of members required to be present for the board to legally conduct the business of the association.

In the absence of a quorum, the only formal actions a board may take are to recess, adjourn, or take measures to obtain a quorum. Your community's bylaws set the quorum for a board meeting.

The Use of Motions

A **motion** is a proposal that the board take a stand or take action on a specific matter. A board of directors can consider ideas from committees, board members, or owners. However, only board members can actually make a motion. Motions should be made only for items listed on the agenda.

Making a Motion

Here are some basic terms you will need to know in order to understand the process of making a motion.

Majority—more than half of the votes cast

Plurality—more votes than any other option receives

Second a motion—required support from one other member before a motion can be considered by the group

Amend a motion—to change a motion by inserting, adding, striking out, striking out and inserting, or substituting words; only the maker of the motion can amend it

Table a motion—to put aside a motion for future consideration at a specific time

Take a motion from the table—to reconsider a motion previously put aside

The sample on the next page provides a brief summary of the basic steps in making motions.

All motions passed during a community association board meeting are recorded in the minutes with the:

1. Exact wording of the motion
2. Name of the person making the motion
3. Result of the vote (According to *Robert's Rules of Order*, when a motion is defeated, it doesn't have to be recorded.)
4. Dissenting minority vote—if those dissenting ask that it be recorded

In addition, any recommendations from committees should be in writing and given to the secretary to place in the minutes of the meeting.

Abstentions

To **abstain** is to not cast a vote. Board members should abstain from voting only for clearly stated reasons such as conflict of interest or ignorance of the matter at hand.

In small groups like boards of directors, abstentions should be discouraged. A board has the fiduciary duty to act on matters brought before the community association.

The abstentions should be recorded in the minutes. A majority of the votes *cast* decides the issue.

SAMPLE: Parliamentary Procedure

To Make a Motion:

- Maker must be recognized by chairperson
- Maker then states, "I move…"
- A second to the motion is required
- The maker of the motion has the right to speak first
- The maker also has the privilege of speaking last before the vote
- The chairperson recognizes each person before he or she speaks

To Amend a Motion:

- Requires a second
- Amendment can be debated and can be amended
- Majority vote is needed to approve the amendment
- Vote on the amendment before voting on the original motion

To Table a Motion:

- Requires a second
- No debate is allowed
- No amendments to the tabling motion can be made
- Majority vote is required to pass the tabling motion
- Can set a definite date for reconsideration

To Adjourn a Meeting:

- Requires a second
- Not debatable
- Cannot be amended
- Majority vote is needed pass

To Take a Motion from the Table:

- Requires a second
- Not debatable
- Cannot be amended
- Majority vote is needed to pass

Role of the Presiding Officer

The presiding officer or person who runs a board meeting is the president of the board—and in that person's absence, usually the vice president. The presiding officer contributes to effective decision making by fulfilling the following duties:

- **Opens the meeting on time, announces the presence of a quorum, and establishes the agenda of the meeting**

- **Sees to it that the meeting follows the agenda**

- **Keeps discussions focused on the matter at hand**

  The presiding officer sees to it that all major issues are brought to the floor in the form of a motion. This focuses the discussion. He or she allows discussion to begin only after a motion is seconded. If no one seconds a motion made during a meeting, it dies for lack of support.

  If discussion wanders or becomes confused, the presiding officer calls people's attention to the motion on the floor as a way of refocusing discussion. If it is clear from the discussion that a decision will not be made within a reasonable period of time during the meeting, the presiding officer asks for a motion to table the issue to a later meeting.

- **Keeps meetings from becoming unreasonably long**

  If meetings always run longer than one-and-a-half to two hours, consider recommending the use of a timed agenda to your presiding officer. A **timed agenda** is a list of meeting items with a period of time assigned to each. Once the time limit is reached, the group moves on to the next agenda item—even if the item under discussion is not completed. Timed agendas must be approved at the beginning of the meeting once time limits for each item on the agenda are announced.

  For a timed agenda to be effective, the presiding officer must politely insist that time limits be obeyed and incomplete items tabled for another meeting. Regardless of whether or not a timed agenda is used, someone should keep time for the presiding officer, so he or she can concentrate on running the meeting.

Behavior During Debate

Debate is the term used in parliamentary procedure for discussing a motion or issue.

Parliamentary procedure calls for the following rules to keep the discussion focused and to avoid disagreements turning personal:

- Direct all remarks to the presiding officer
- Stop speaking when the presiding officer finds it necessary to speak
- Confine remarks to the issue being discussed
- Avoid using members' names when you refer to their positions
- Avoid attacking members' motives
- The presiding officer should warn a member about a serious offense the first time it happens (For example—personal attacks, use of obscene language, etc.)

Executive Sessions

There are times when a board must hold a discussion or make decisions of a sensitive nature. Many states have so-called "sunshine laws" which limit the reasons why a governing board may go into a closed or **executive session**.

The topics that commonly require an executive session and are allowable by law usually include:

- Personnel issues
- Contract negotiations and discussions
- Lawsuits and other legal matters
- Governing document violations

While discussions in executive sessions are secret and separate privileged minutes are kept, any decisions made must be brought to an open session and voted on there. Privileged means that access to and use of the minutes by others is restricted.

Recording Minutes for Meetings

The **minutes** of a meeting document the decisions made during the meeting. This provides a permanent public record of positions and actions taken by a board. The secretary of the board is responsible for maintaining all official records, including the minute book of all board meetings.

Minutes should reflect what was done at a meeting, not what was said. The minutes may list the name and topic for any speaker, but not a summary of the person's remarks. Minutes should state:

- The type of meeting—such as, regular or special
- Name of the group
- Date and time of the meeting—and the place, if it is not always the same

- Presence of the president and secretary or their substitutes
- Presence of a quorum and the names of the people present
- Action taken on the minutes of the previous meeting and corrections, if any
- Exact wording of a motion as it is adopted, including the name of the person making the motion
- Hour of adjournment

As a community manager, you should NOT take the minutes at a board meeting. Your responsibility is to concentrate on the dynamics of the meeting in order to assist when needed. You cannot do that and take minutes at the same time.

To free the secretary and the manager to concentrate on the board's discussion, many community associations use a tape recorder to back up note-taking or hire a stenographer to come in and take notes. If a meeting is taped to assist in preparation of the minutes, the tape should be erased when the minutes are approved.

Action Item Lists

An **action item list** is a list of actions to be taken before the next meeting as a result of decisions made at the current one. An action item list contains the decisions to be implemented together with the names of those assigned implementing responsibility. A sample action item list appears on the next page.

Notice how the decision-making cycle is completed and begins again as you review a set of minutes and an action item list to prepare for the next board meeting.

Owner Meetings

Although the focus of this chapter is on board of directors meetings, we would like to end this section with some basic information on owners' meetings for your use.

Owners' meetings can be annual or special. Special meetings are devoted to a specific issue. Usually a special meeting is called when the bylaws require the vote of all owners on some action the board would like to take.

Your bylaws will state the quorum needed for an owners' meeting. Whether a motion requires a plurality, a majority, or two-thirds approval will depend on your governing documents and the issue.

Owners' meetings often require the use of ballots. A **ballot** is a written means of voting when secrecy is desired. Your governing documents will also tell you when proxies are permissible. A **proxy** is a written statement authorizing another person to cast a vote on the signer's behalf.

SAMPLE: Action Item List

From Meeting of 6/01/20xx

MANAGEMENT

1. Main entrance light is still out and needs to be replaced.

2. Need signs to slow down traffic. Possibly "Dead End/No Through Street."

3. Towing signs needed.

4. Need lawn watered during summer months. One owner has volunteered to assist. Contact Ms. Hunt at 336-8212.

5. New dumpster needed for the area near buildings 6 and 7.

DEVELOPER

1. It was requested that the developer look into the parking problem and evaluate it. It was also requested that they look into cutting into the green space for more parking.

2. Crepe myrtles are to be placed outside unit 3850. Are they in the plan or does the association have to pay for them?

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1.	Roof bids:	Commercial Roof Services	$_______
		Roof Services Corp.	$_______
		Verbal bid (individual)	$_______

All prices are for twice-per-year inspection. Bids to be given to property committee for review and selection.

THE MANAGER'S ROLE

As a manager, you are also a key element in effective board meetings. This final section of the chapter will discuss:

- The dual role of a manager
- How to facilitate a meeting
- The role of personalities in meetings

The Dual Role of a Manager

A manager plays two roles at a board of directors meeting—support staff and professional advisor:

- **The manager as support staff**—As staff, a manager has the responsibility to see to it that meetings are well-prepared and board members have the necessary information ahead of time. Here are some suggestions from successful community managers:

  - ☐ Stay informed about committee activity and provide assistance when needed.
  - ☐ Handle all matters relating to a board meeting well in advance.
  - ☐ Try to create the most pleasant working atmosphere for meetings as possible.
  - ☐ Develop a clear understanding as to exactly what type of support volunteer leaders expect and how much. (For example—number of meetings, reports typed, phone calls.)
  - ☐ Work closely enough with your presiding officer to enable the two of you to evaluate and adjust the support provided—as necessary.

- **The manager as professional advisor**—As a professional advisor, a manager must provide a board with guidance and perspective on the matters at hand.

  Suggestions from successful community managers:

  - ☐ Alert your board to community issues that need to be resolved.
  - ☐ Demonstrate professional competence in answering questions.
  - ☐ Be careful to state your opinions only within your field of management expertise. (NEVER give a legal opinion. Rely on professionals when it is deemed necessary.)

- □ If you don't have an answer, promise to get back with one within a specific time. Don't fake it!
- □ Keep your board informed on matters of interest in the field of common interest real estate as they develop.
- □ Provide training sessions as part of board meetings and encourage board members to take advantage of outside educational opportunities. For example—local or national training sessions for volunteer community leaders offered by Community Associations Institute.
- □ Be prepared to make adjustments for the fact that board members' participation is a voluntary activity that must compete with their other obligations and interests.
- □ Be a source of history and continuity for your board during its deliberations.

How to Facilitate a Meeting

As a professional advisor, a community manager is expected to facilitate board meetings in a low-key manner. To facilitate is to help a process or action move forward. The challenge for a manager is to do this without taking charge of a meeting.

Here are some things to do to keep a meeting moving. The challenge is to do them with a simple question or appeal to parliamentary procedure so you won't appear heavy-handed.

- **Help keep discussions on target.** For example—"Could the secretary repeat the motion that's on the floor?"
- **Offer alternatives when discussions stall.** For example—"Would it help if we tabled that motion until the next meeting to enable the Recreation Committee to get some answers to those questions from the bidders?"
- **Call attention to past board actions when they are relevant to the current matter and overlooked.** For example—"Some of you will recall that the board considered that issue last spring and decided to wait until after the parking lots were repaved."

- **Be a timekeeper.** For example—Unobtrusively keep an eye on your watch. If time starts to slip away during a discussion, quietly let your presiding officer know with a prearranged signal.

- **Be alert to proposed actions that might be in conflict with your community's bylaws.** For example—Always bring a set of your community's governing documents to board meetings.

- **Urge consistency in actions of the board.** For example—If a board imposes a late fee in one case, it should impose a late fee in all similar cases.

- **Support the principle of fairness.** For example—If a board replaces a dead tree on a common area in front of one owner's home, it should be prepared to replace other dead trees as the issue arises.

- **Elaborate on your management report.** For example—Highlight the key points in your report at the meeting. Respond to questions and offer additional explanations as needed.

The Role of Personalities in Meetings

Part of being a good meeting facilitator is to recognize the role personalities play in meetings. Personalities are the element that make meetings interesting—and unpredictable!

Learn to recognize different personality types. Think about how to use people's strengths to get things done. At the same time, anticipate how to compensate for their limitations.

Here are some final tips from experienced community managers:

- Do not make personal judgments about people. This type of judgment about others will hamper your effectiveness.

- Identify the decision makers in a group early and work through them.

- Don't immediately dismiss a complainer. Consider a complaint. It may be legitimate! On the other hand, don't change your efforts in response to every complaint you receive. Recognize that chronic complainers are bothered by something other than the issue they are complaining about.

- When people are angry, try to understand why. Ask for an explanation. Sometimes the opportunity to be heard calms people down.

- When someone gets too hot under the collar to calm down, call for a break. In severe situations, reschedule your meeting.

- Finally, remember that you are but one element in an effective meeting. When a meeting goes well, take pride in your contribution to its effectiveness. But when things beyond your control go wrong, don't blame yourself. You're going to participate in a lot of meetings over the course of your career in community management. Some will go smoother than others.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

Use the following questions to help you identify and review the core concepts in this chapter. (*Hint:* Once you look up the answer to a question, you may want to jot down the page number next to the question for future reference.)

1. What should the focus of board of directors meetings be?

2a. What are the three functions of a board of directors?
b. For each function, list at least one corresponding board responsibility.

3. What does adequate preparation for a board of directors meeting include?

4. What are some things a manager can do to prepare for decision making at meetings?

5a. Who should receive a notice of a board meeting?
b. What items should be included with the notice?

6a. What is the standard order of items on a meeting agenda?
b. What are the various uses of an agenda?

7. What are some considerations when selecting and preparing a site for a board of directors meeting?

8. What are the five basic principles of parliamentary procedure that apply to every meeting?

9. Why is a quorum for a meeting important?

10. Describe some things a presiding officer can do during a meeting to facilitate decision making.

11. What are some rules that apply to debate at meetings that help to keep discussion focused and disagreements impersonal?

12a. What is the purpose of an executive session?
b. What are some topics for an executive session that the law usually allows?

13a. Who is responsible for taking minutes at a board meeting?
b. What items of information should be included in the minutes of a meeting?

14. Explain the dual role of a community manager.

15. List some of the things a manager can do to facilitate an effective board meeting.

16. Explain the role of personalities in meetings and how a good facilitator should take them into account.

THOUGHT/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use the following questions to help you apply the information in this chapter to your own situation.

1a. Are there any improvements that can be made in the focus of your board meetings that would lead to more effective decision making?
b. How can you work with others to make those improvements?

2a. Are there any improvements that can be made in the preparations for your board meetings that would lead to more effective decision making?
b. How can you work with others to make those improvements?

3a. Are there any improvements that can be made in the conduct of your board meetings that would lead to more effective decision making?
b. How can you work with others to make those improvements?

4a. Are there any improvements that can be made in your role at board meetings that would lead to more effective decision making?
b. How can you work with others to make those improvements?

RESOURCES

For further information on board meetings and decision making, we suggest the following:

The A-B-Cs of Parliamentary Procedure. A brief, illustrated booklet that outlines the basic process involved in running a meeting according to *Robert's Rules of Order*. (Channing L. Bete, 2003.)

The Art of Successful Meetings, by William Dixon Southworth. Comprehensive treatment in one useful resource. Covers basics like chairing a meeting, motions, committees, voting and membership, what to do about conflicting motions, and how to handle unusual procedures like correcting minutes or rescinding. Contains valuable tips for ensuring that your meetings are positive and productive. (McGraw-Hill, 2000.)

Basic Parliamentary Procedure Workbook, Sixth Edition, by Joyce L. Stephens. How-to manual on conforming to basic parliamentary procedure. Covers decorum, how to write a resolution, meeting minutes, proper language for presiding officers, completing action on motions, and common errors to avoid. (Frederick Publishers, 2001.)

Community Association Leadership: A Guide for Volunteers, Anne M. Calmes, Editor. Covers how to attract more residents to association volunteer work and how to enable them to perform better by gaining a thorough understanding of committee work and the volunteer's role. (Community Associations Institute, 1997.)

Conducting Meetings: A Guide to Running Productive Community Association Board Meetings, M.J. Keatts, Editor. Helps community association directors and managers run effective, efficient board meetings. Discusses how to prepare for a meeting, how to take proper meeting minutes, the potential benefits and drawbacks of recording meetings, and appropriate agenda items for executive sessions. Includes an outline of *Robert's Rules of Order* that's perfectly tailored for association meetings. (Community Associations Institute, 1998.)

Decision Making in Communities: Why Groups of Smart People Sometimes Make Bad Decisions, by Jasmine Martirossian. Presents a fascinating look at the unseen forces that affect groups of people in community associations—including boards, management teams, and committees—and the decisions they make. (Community Associations Press, 2001.)

Guide to Annual Meetings, Special Meetings, and Elections (*Guide for Association Practitioners Series, Report #21*), by P. Michael Nagle, ESQ. Addresses all aspects of meeting procedures from giving notice of a meeting to conducting and controlling the meeting. Topics include quorums, ballots, voting, elections, nominations, and proxies. (Community Associations Institute, 1998.)

Guide for the Presiding Officer: A Functional Guide for Presidents and Chairmen, Third Edition, by Joyce L. Stephens. Will help readers chair meetings with confidence in spite of disagreements, diverse opinions, and even outright conflict. Contains detailed descriptions of key rules, tips on communicating more effectively, and advice on body language. (Frederick Publishers, 1997.)

Robert's Rules of Order—A number of inexpensive paperback versions are available. The League of Women Voters publishes an excellent flyer that summarizes the basic points.

The Role of the Association President (Guide for Association Practitioners Series, Report #23), Second Edition, by Robert T. Dennistoun. Offers tips and advice on how presidents can improve the overall quality of life in their communities. (Community Associations Institute, 1996.)

The Role of the Association Secretary (Guide for Association Practitioners Series, Report #18), Second Edition, by Anita Hagerty Schenk, PCAM and P. Michael Nagel, ESQ. Explains the secretary's duty to record the history of the association, handle correspondence, and maintain the filing system. Includes examples of agendas, minutes, and other forms needed. (Community Associations Institute, 1999.)